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TOM BRIMS'S INDIAN PRINCES.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

VERY odd things at times have a momentary vogue in Paris. No matter what the triviality may be, if it can only set a certain amount of talk afloat respecting itself, its fortune is made for a number of hours. During a short stay I was making in the gay city before the siege darkened it—when, indeed, no such darkening was thought of—a tradesman's shop-window in the Rue St — was having a brief success of this kind. Ladies were everywhere going into raptures over a show of shoes to be seen in it. Men talked of the sight in the cafés as earnestly as if it had been a matter of national interest. For two or three days the police had to make special arrangements for the circulation of people on the pavement in front of the shop. The display consisted of a large assortment of slippers specially made for some Indian princes then in the French capital.

'Monsieur must see it,' emphatically said a waiter, shrugging his shoulders, presenting the open palms of his hands towards me, and lifting them to a level with his ears, which he brought down to meet them. 'It was not possible for a person of taste like Monsieur to leave Paris before going to look. That would be a mistake; it would be a sin; it would be a crime! Such boots had never been seen before! They did glory to France! The great Indian princes would only wear each pair for a single day, and then kick them aside. It was a pity. Yah! Monsieur had no idea what a show could be made of boots; and it was only two, three, four streets away. The man had shewn wonderful taste. He was entitled to Monsieur's admiration. Monsieur could not be cruel to the maker, cruel to himself, cruel to everybody, by not seeing them.'

I felt that I could not be guilty of cruelty so wholesale. It is true that it turned out, from a question I put, that the waiter had been hard-hearted to that extent: he had not seen the boots!

My time was vacant on my hands that evening; I started at once.

When I turned the top corner of the Rue St —, it instantly became apparent that the attractiveness of the show had only been reasonably exaggerated. A little hubbub of voices made itself heard. At the front of moderate-sized premises, about half-way down on the left-hand side, was an excited group, constantly fed by fresh arrivals. All were good-humoured, talkative, noisy. By a slow process, I reached the window. I certainly saw a very pretty display. Behind the polished plate-glass, arranged upon a sloping base of delicate gray tint, rows, crescents, rings, triangles of slippers of oriental shape and decoration shone and glowed in all the variety of coloured leathers and spangled brocade. There seemed a number sufficient for an army. The grouping of the hues and the systematic arrangement generally, was doubtless an artistic achievement of its kind.

In a little space in front of the window, was moving about the proud, breathless owner of the establishment, a middle-aged Frenchman of very ordinary type, bare-headed, and with his coat sleeves turned back to an extent which, in the case of an English tradesman in like circumstances, would have meant that he was preparing for a pugilistic conflict with the crowd for coming too near his window. Nothing was further from the intention of the Frenchman. He was volubly guiding the admiration of the spectators into the right channels. He unhesitatingly pointed out the merits of his own productions, recounting, with great pomp of gesticulation, and most wonderful pronunciation, the names and titles of his great customers, the Indian princes. Just as the batch of on-lookers, of which I formed one, was moving away to make room for the next, the voices of the three or four gendarmes present were raised in shrill authority. A great sensation ran through the crowd.

The bare-headed master of the shop, flinging his arms aloft frantically, exclaimed sublimely: 'They are here!' He rushed forward in the direction of the bustle. A passage was formed to the shop-door,

most of the male bystanders raising their hats, as along the narrow lane came three Hindus, clad in turbans and voluminous eastern robes, short scimitars, with jewelled hilts, flashing at their sides. They were the princes coming to pay their bootmaker a visit; perhaps to order another windowful of incomparable slippers.

Suddenly, as I looked, a feeling of amazement seized me. Behind the Indians, himself languidly acknowledging the salutations, as though he considered they were meant partially for him, advanced a more European person.

'That,' I heard it whispered around me, 'is their interpreter.'

But, surely, that familiar, tall, lank figure could only belong to one being in the world; those large, sallow features shewing under the gold-braided cap, with its white linen folds of sun-protecting curtain falling on the shoulders, could not be mistaken for any other. The interpreter's gaze met mine. He, too, made a start of recognition. Upon his closing the near blue eye in a rapid wink, there was no longer any possibility of doubt. Unquestionably, it was Tom Brims, late of the same shipping-office with myself in London, who was filling the important and dignified post of interpreter to the Indian princes.

Six months before, he had left the Fenchurch Street premises, owing to not being sufficiently appreciated by the heads of the establishment. It was, in fact, at their instance that he departed, to reside with a maiden aunt living somewhere in France. He severed himself from his desk in the best of spirits, making his exit with perfect self-possession, and not without a certain grace; but he had had much experience previously in going through the performance, both at home and abroad. Educated for the Indian service, Tom Brims had gone out to the East; but he reappeared in London in a period of time which could not be considered long, taking into account the distance. The explanation he gave was, that a Hindu potentate wished to adopt him as his successor; but that the governor-general of India enviously objected. After this, his stay in India, he said, was made so uncomfortable by intrigues, that he left for England. I will confess that we had thought Tom Brims was in part romancing; here, however, he was with these great Hindu chiefs.

He paused, and solemnly lifting his finger, called to me in some gibberish, such as we had used in Fenchurch Street, and which I knew to mean that he would meet me in five minutes in a shop on the opposite side of the way. The crowd, on seeing and hearing me thus addressed, gave way very respectfully around me. Hats were lifted; a way was indicated for me to advance. I had presence of mind to bow to those making a road for me: availing myself of it, I crossed the pavement, and, rather diffidently, passed just within the doorway of the shop. There, in less than the five minutes, Tom Brims came to me.

'You unbelieving wretch,' were his first words, 'didn't I always tell you and the other fellows in the office I should make my fortune some day? I did not make one in India when I was there, I know—more fool I was for it; but I shan't be a simpleton this time. Their mahogany Highnesses here are rolling in the rupees I have a lack of—ha! ha!—I mean to make more than a lac of it.'

I grasped Tom's hand, congratulating him, although I hardly knew how to address him, he was so changed altogether, looking so grand in his gold-lace and semi-uniform.

The bootmaker, having discovered that as the princes knew not a word of French, he was wasting his volubility in the absence of Tom, here came smiling towards us, and reminded him, in the politest way, that he was needed by their Magnificences.

Tom lightly waved him off with his hand. He said aside to me in English: 'Let them wait. They could not stir a yard without me. I have got them under my thumb completely. They come from Upper India, right away from the known parts, and there is not a man within thousands of miles of us at this moment who could tell a word they say.' He went on to add that it was the luckiest thing in the world. He was on the quay at Marseille when they landed. The interpreter they had brought with them was, poor fellow, killed on the spot by falling headlong into a dock, where a vessel crushed him. He himself stepped forward, was of much service to them, and was appointed straightway.

I told him how delighted I was at his good fortune, but said I must not detain him. The fellows in the office, I assured him, would be equally glad of the news. I was taking my leave. His large features relaxed into a grin, deepening into a chuckle; then, instantly, he put on a most tremendous frown. 'It would never do,' he muttered, 'for them to see him laughing. If I keep them waiting any longer,' he continued, 'when they get back to the hotel, they'll run their swords through two or three of the poor wretches of their suite. Nobody could hurt them for it, as they are travelling under Ambassadors' Law. I'll stop, if you like.'

'You must come to me at the hotel,' he added; 'come at six o'clock. There will be time for a little chat. We are going to one of the minor theatres to-night; we shall go to the Grand Opera when we come back to Paris from London. They are in a sort of incognito till they reach England, for fear of offending the Indian Secretary.'

He gave me a card of the hotel; taking it, I hastily made my way out into the street, amazed at the coolness with which Tom Brims sauntered towards those fierce magnates.

At six o'clock that evening, instead of being at Tom Brims's hotel, I was some fifty miles away from Paris, hastening on the railway route to Calais on my way for England. The re-extension of my holiday had run out, and I knew that if I had any dispute with my principals in Fenchurch Street I could not hope to tumble into an interpretership to great Indian nabobs. If there was no other reason, I did not know any eastern languages, which was perhaps sufficient. I did not choose to take up Brims's invaluable time, by explaining this; but, before quitting Paris, I posted a letter to him stating it. It was great news I was taking back to the London office. The clerks were only a little less amazed at it, second-hand, than I was in the first instance. Business in the office, I fear, suffered from our watching the newspapers from day to day for the arrival of the great personages in this country.

The intimation was found in the *Times* on the morning of the fourth day. It appeared among

the parliamentary intelligence. A well-known honourable member, who devotes himself mainly to shewing that whatever relates to India, no matter how it is done, is grossly mismanaged, had indignantly asked the Indian minister in the House of Commons, on the previous evening, whether it was true that the hospitality of the country was to be again disgraced by their Highnesses, the Indian princes, just upon the point of landing on our shores, not being received in some special way befitting their rank and authority?

The minister, in reply, said every attention would be paid to the distinguished visitors. But at present, their Highnesses had not officially notified their wishes. In Paris, they had preserved a kind of incognito: it was not known what their desires as to publicity might be. Owing to an accident which it was understood befell their interpreter, an offer of services had been tendered to the princes by the English Embassy in Paris; but it had been replied by their Highnesses, that they had the adequate aid of an eminent Englishman in that capacity.

Our office startled the whole premises, from basement to roof, by a round of cheers. The eminent Englishman could be no other than Tom Brims. He had achieved fame; he had been alluded to in the British parliament. It calmed our excitement a little in the course of the morning to carve an inscription upon the desk which had had the honour in former times of propping his elbows, and on which he had momentarily rested the pewter pots containing his stout. Each one of us, by means of our penknives, contributed a word in turn. The composition stated that 'T. Brims, Esq. the eminent Englishman alluded to in parliament by the Indian minister, on the evening of the sixteenth of July, as the able interpreter of their Highnesses the Indian princes then visiting Europe, once laboured at that obscure desk.'

The junior member of the firm—for such a thing as this was not to be kept a secret from the principals—said we had made a mistake in the last word but four of the inscription. It was inaccurate, he said, to assert that Brims had 'laboured' at that desk.

But Tom Brims's fellow-clerks did him what feeble honour they could, in return for the greater honour he had conferred on them and on the office. As soon as we learned that the princes had arrived in London, and were located at Claridge's, we made business bend to higher considerations. We arranged for a collective attendance in front of that hotel at an early hour on the following morning. We there patiently awaited the issuing forth of their Highnesses for the day's sight-seeing. By using our elbows, and by letting it be known among the group assembled there, that we were friends of the great interpreter, we got front places. It happened exactly as I had foretold to the clerks. The three bejewelled chieftains, their visages sallow, their dark eyes fiercer even than in Paris, came out with a stately shuffle; then followed Tom Brims, this time without the white linen curtain to his hat, doubtless in compliment to his native climate; and, after him, three or four Hindus of humble dress and appearance belonging to the suite. At sight of Tom Brims, his old associates, drawing closer together in a semicircle, swung their hats into the air, giving a loud hurrah in his honour.

It was misunderstood by the princes. They stopped short; the eldest, whose swarthy countenance became of a sickly pallor, drew his flashing scimitar half-way out of its jewel-enamelled sheath. I am ashamed to say there was a panic. The clerks fled, and so did the rest of the group whom the clerks had not knocked sprawling over in the first impulsive effort. These prostrate individuals a policeman on duty there judiciously attacked, saying, as he vigorously used his stick: 'Do you think as their Highnesses is used to sich rows as we have to put up with?'

As for myself, I had a justification for going quickly into the middle of the road. Brims had told me of the habit the princes had of turning their displeasure upon their servants. I had no wish that even two or three Hindus should perish for me. But their Highnesses rallied. The impression that it was a plot to assassinate them, passed away. The scimitar was restored to its hiding, unstained by blood, and the princes got into their carriages. Tom Brims had recognised us. His blue eye closed in rapid succession several times. He had to enter one of the vehicles, but, before doing so, he came to the back of the carriage, beckoning to him one of us, the least far away. He left a message, saying that all was right; we should hear from him.

We did more than hear from Tom; we saw him; we feasted with him. His greatness had neither turned his head nor spoiled his heart. On the following night, when he managed to get two hours of leisure, he entertained us at a hotel in Fleet Street in a manner which would have done no discredit to the princes, if they, instead of their interpreter, had themselves been the givers of the banquet. Behind Tom Brims's chair squatted a turbaned servant whom he had brought with him; not to wait upon him, for the Hindu knew nothing of our habits. Brims must have brought him as a specimen. It had a great effect, since, whenever Tom addressed him in queer-sounding words, the servant went down on his hands and knees to reply. In his reply to our compliments in drinking his health, he graciously wished he could make all our fortunes as easily as his own had been made. But it was impossible. His influence over the princes, though it might be considerable, must not be over-estimated. All that he could do would be to make a post on their Highnesses' staff for one of us, by way of shewing what he wished he could have done for all. His own duties were too much for him. What with messengers from the Indian Office, and calls from peeresses and ladies of fashion, who wanted the princes for lions, he was greatly overworked. If some one of us would not consider it derogatory to act for a time as his secretary, he had no doubt that on his asking their Highnesses they would make the appointment. As to remuneration, our hopes must be moderate. He could not hold out a prospect of more than—say, £200 or £250 a month during the princes' stay, with a handsome present at the close.

Everybody was attacked with a fit of modesty. They said it was too much.

'Nay,' answered Brims; 'it is only their cashing one diamond more. See, this is how the princes pay!' He threw down upon the table three loose stones of large size, and which, only half-cut as they were, glinted and coruscated in the gas-light.

Putting them carelessly back into his waistcoat pocket, after our awed examination of them, he added, that it would be difficult for him to make a selection from among us—to choose who his secretary should be. We must give him a little time to think about it. It would have to be a kind of lottery.

When Tom Brims left, which he did amidst the most vociferous cheering, I, in pursuance of a signal he made to me, went with him, the others being left to continue the entertainment. If any of them were indulging hopes of the secretaryship, they were doomed to disappointment. As soon as we were in the cab, the turbaned servant being outside on the box with the driver, Tom put his hand heavily on my shoulder, and said: 'You are the man! It is only fair; you had the start of the others. You picked me up in Paris, you know.'

I was overwhelmed. I told him, that, owing to his friendship, my luck was going to be second only to his own.

Tom took me with him into the hotel. Their Highnesses were in their rooms, as was sufficiently betokened by the rich odour of strange aromatic drugs, mingled with the scent of fine powerful tobacco, with which the atmosphere was heavy. The apartments were a handsome suite in the ordinary way, no doubt, but just then they had an untidy, makeshift look, owing to all the European furniture, with the exception of a stray couch and an odd chair in a corner, having been removed. Thick cushions placed on gay carpet-covered mattresses here and there did not quite make up, in my unaccustomed eyes, for the absence of more furniture. It too much resembled the last night in a house from which you were flitting, or else the first in which you had just arrived, before the household belongings were unpacked. Tom Brims passed into the innermost room for an audience with the nabobs. Several dark-skinned, melancholy-eyed figures, looking very mysterious in their long tucked-up robes, glided noiselessly in and out, never failing deeply to salaam to me in passing. I was embarrassed: to merely nod back seemed such a very poor acknowledgment of their elaborate ceremonial performance.

When Tom came back to me, he had a great bundle of open letters and documents in his hand. He was in ill-humour, and he made the Hindu attendants know it by the strength of the language he indulged in. They only bent still lower before him—growing meeker, if it were possible.

'I know that expense matters nothing to them,' said Tom, having skirmished the natives from the room; 'but it is the childishness of the thing that vexes me. I find in the Exhibition, this morning, they bought thirteen carriages.' He flourished the accounts for them openly in his hand, his voice and eyes not quite free of traces of the banquet we had come from. 'Thirteen! If they had bought, say, three, well and good; but no; they go in for above a dozen. I say, it is ridiculous.'

I tried to soothe him.

'But,' he persisted, 'if they go on purchasing as they have done in Paris and here, there won't be shipping enough in all the ports of Britain to convey the things to Bombay.'

I waited while he hastily docketed the papers, finally stowing them away in a travelling-desk. That done, he turned about, and clapped his hands, which startled me as much as our English

cheer the day before had scared the nabobs. He grimly smiled, pointing, by way of explanation, to a crouching attendant, who had instantly appeared in the doorway in answer to the summons.

In the course of a little confidential conversation which followed, Tom explained to me the princes' plans. He said they would leave London the day after to-morrow, for a short time. They were sensible people in their own way, he said, if they did not fool their money away so. They had determined to get through their business before giving themselves up to pleasure. One chief object of their visit was to get really to know what England was, and, with that view, they intended going down to Manchester, and from thence to Liverpool. Then, having made their observations in the manufacturing and commercial centres, they would return to the metropolis for a round of festivities among the grandees. 'Then,' said Brims, 'we shall shew you what Indian splendour is. That is,' he added hollowly, and with a rapid change of face, 'if we are all spared.'

He repeated this grave reflection more than once; a kind of melancholy progressively overpowered him.

'I fear,' said he, 'that from present appearance a coroner's inquest will have to be held.'

Utterly bewildered, I begged him to explain himself.

'Pull me up,' he answered. 'When I sat down here, I had forgotten the length of my legs. We will go out, and I'll tell you all.'

After I had helped him up, and he had stretched his cramped limbs into use again, we went down into the street.

'I think,' said Tom, 'your stipend ought to be more than the paltry sum I mentioned, because I fear it won't last long. In a certain number of days, I expect they will every one be starved to death.'

What could I do but doubt my own ears. 'In a land of plenty!' I exclaimed.

'They got rid of their cook in Paris,' he said with a groan.

'Well, what of that?' I asked; 'why don't they get another cook?'

'That shews how little you know of India and Indians,' he answered. 'There is not another cook for them within ten thousand miles. You might just as well tell them to get another interpreter.'

I ventured to say that some of the other servants could make shift in that way surely.

'I did not know that you were so perfectly ignorant,' said Tom. 'That is the result of your ignorance of Indian superstitions. If these princes tasted a morsel cooked by a man not of the right caste, they would be lost for ever—at least, they believe so. They will perish of hunger first, I can tell you. They are living now on some rice-cakes that happened to be baked ready, eked out with opium and tobacco-smoke. But they cannot do that long. I want to get them down to Manchester as quickly as I can, for I believe there is a little colony of Brahmins there, and they may get a mouthful of food.'

I could not help turning about to look up at the hotel windows, in wonder, thinking of these eastern potentates, rolling in diamonds, yet sitting there in the midst of great, noisy, heedless London, starving on account of a religious scruple. What suggestion was it possible for anybody to make

in such a case as that? Tom, speaking in sepulchral tones, said :

'Let us hope something will turn up at Manchester to keep them alive. You must get leave of absence from Fenchurch Street; they will never stand in the way of your making a little fortune in a few weeks. I'll push the figures up high enough for it to be worth your while whatever happens.'

Tom Brims, after this unburdening of his mind, quickly recovered his spirits. It was no fault of his, he said, that the princes were such fanatics. When I parted from him, I went home, and dreamt all night, in slightly varying forms, that the wealth of India was mine, but that there was not a cook to be had, and that I had nothing but unboiled diamonds to eat.

METROPOLITAN ASYLUMS.

In few things has there been so great an improvement of late years as in the treatment of the insane. Formerly, a lunatic was regarded with loathing and horror; his treatment was worse than a malefactor's—it was that of a wild beast. The unfortunate being who had lost his reason was considered to have lost all claim on society; he was often thrust into a filthy cell, loaded with chains, and subjected to every species of brutality. Happily, this state of things has now been altered. In the public asylums, at least (and it is of these only that we are now speaking), a totally opposite system prevails. It has at last been recognised, that to restore a healthy tone of mind, moral influences are more powerful than any other. Seclusion from exciting society, but not necessarily solitude; occupation and amusement of the mind, so as to divert the thoughts from himself; gentleness and kindness, combined with firmness, on the part of the physician and the attendants—these are some of the means which have been found most successful in producing an effect upon the mind of the insane; and this is the system which has superseded the old tortures of chains and strait-waistcoats.

In England, the Lord Chancellor, acting on behalf of the crown, is the guardian of all lunatics and idiots, and he appoints commissions for licensing and visiting all public asylums. For the reception and treatment of pauper lunatics, there are in London, or the immediate neighbourhood, five public asylums. This does not include institutions for idiots and imbeciles, who are, of course, quite a distinct class from lunatics. For popular purposes, the insane may be divided into two classes—those suffering from Monomania, and those from General Derangement of the Intellect. Monomania is when the mind becomes possessed by some illusion or false conviction, the reasoning faculties retaining their powers in regard to other subjects. The individual so affected may be full of some grotesque but inveterate fancy respecting his own person. We once knew of a gentleman who imagined he was a tea-pot, and used to go about with one arm held straight out for the spout, and the other bent so as to form the handle. Another thought he was made of glass, and was afraid to sit down or make any sudden movement, for fear of breaking to pieces. Or the person possessed of this diseased

mind may fancy himself a king, or some other great personage; or, if it takes the very frequent form of religious monomania, he may imagine himself the object of some direct communication from the Almighty. On all subjects unconnected with his peculiar mania, he will be apparently sane and rational. General Derangement of the Intellect is the graver and more severe form of the malady, in which the faculties of the mind generally are disordered. This shews itself in different ways, according to the variety of the complaint and the constitution of the patient. With one, it leads to violence or raving; with another, to unnatural gaiety; with a third, it manifests itself in incoherent and unintelligent mutterings. Some cases may last only a few weeks, others for a whole lifetime. There are in the lunatic asylums patients who have been there for twenty and thirty years; some of whom will never pass out of their doors again. There are many others who get well, and are discharged cured, but upon mixing in society, and going back to their old haunts and habits, are again overtaken by the disease. Insanity, as a rule, rarely manifests itself before the ages of fourteen or fifteen, though, in occasional instances, it is seen earlier. From that period up to the age of forty, the liability to the disease increases; and it is far commoner in females than males, as is proved by the relative numbers of the sexes in the different asylums.

The best known, by name at least, of all the lunatic asylums in the world is Bedlam, and its name is even pronounced, we believe, by many who are unaware that it is a corruption of Bethlehem, and that this hospital for poor lunatics, founded more than three centuries ago in Lambeth, takes its name from the native village of our Lord. It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast than between the popular notion of Bedlam, as a scene of riot, disorder, and confusion, and the sight which actually meets the visitor who is admitted within its doors. He will find himself in a large and lofty gallery, comfortably fitted up, and adorned with all that modern refinement can suggest either to please the eye or to divert the mind. Ferneries, aquariums, large cages of birds, afford subjects for recreation, and healthful interesting study; while here and there are, sitting or strolling about, quiet and, for the most part, cheerful-looking groups, conversing, reading, or working. In one part, a young woman is playing upon the piano, which seems to be rather a favourite pursuit among the patients. Altogether, the scene is one of the most perfect order and decorum, opposed in the most singular manner to all our ideas of the proverbial Bedlam.

It is reported that during the recent visit of the Shah to this country, some of his attendants paid a visit to Hanwell, and upon leaving the asylum, expressed themselves greatly gratified with what they had observed there; but they added, that the only thing further they would have desired would have been, to see a few of the patients: they were perfectly ignorant that the quiet, ordinary-looking men and women among whom they had passed could be the lunatics! Whether the story be true or not, it is quite certain that a stranger might well pass through this gallery in Bedlam without being aware that those with whom he came in contact were in any way different from other men and women. True, that on

ascending to a gallery above, where are patients whose disease is of longer standing, and consequently more severe, we might discern upon their features the unmistakable marks of insanity; but even here, they are, for the most part, externally calm and well behaved. This is no doubt attributable to the admirable system, combining gentleness and firmness, with which they are treated. A proof of the general orderliness that prevails is that, in these large galleries, which are about one hundred yards long, and in which there are ordinarily thirty or forty patients, there are not more than four or five attendants. One side of the building is reserved for male patients, and the other for female. On each side, three of these long galleries rise one above the other, and the bedrooms open off them. Most of the patients have a room to themselves; some few of the rooms have two or three beds. No attendant sleeps in any of the rooms; but there is a night-watch constantly on duty in the galleries. It sounds strange, and almost startling, to be shewn a ballroom in a madhouse; but so it is: these poor afflicted creatures have not altogether lost their taste for the amusements of society, and when harmless, they are considerably allowed to gratify it. During the winter season, balls are given in this room regularly once a fortnight; of course, not all the patients are admissible, but only a selection from among the less severe cases. An invitation is eagerly coveted by the female patients, and the guest is generally sure to take care that nothing on her part shall prevent a repetition of the invitation. Among the male patients, billiards is the favourite pastime, and it is encouraged amongst the less severe cases. There is a capital well-lighted room with a good table on their side of the house, which is well patronised by those of the patients who are permitted to use it.

Of Hanwell Asylum it would be more correct to speak as a lunatic colony than a lunatic asylum. It contains a population of over two thousand souls, about eighteen hundred of whom are pauper lunatics. There is an extensive farm attached to the asylum, upon which a large number of the patients are employed; by means of which, they are not only enabled to contribute towards their own support, but are also provided with a healthy occupation for body and mind. This is an important part of the system of treatment. In addition to the usual departments of farm-work, the patients assist in baking their own bread, in brewing their own beer, and in cooking their own dinner. Some idea of the daily consumption of the inmates of this asylum may be formed from the fact, that they bake about two thousand pounds of bread, draw about two hundred and fifty gallons of beer, and boil half a ton of potatoes per diem. The entire cooking is done by gas and steam; and the total cost of cooking a dinner for eighteen hundred people is thus reduced to something less than half-a-crown. The manner in which these dinners are sent out from the kitchen is quite a spectacle. The patients are ranged in batches in the corridor outside; and punctually as the clock strikes one, the first tray, containing a series of dinners, is slid out, and received by the appointed hands; and so quickly do these trays succeed one another, and so rapidly and in so orderly a manner are they borne away, that in less than five minutes from the clock striking, eighteen hundred dinners

have been served out and carried into the different wards. To Hanwell belongs the credit of having originated the non-restraint system, which has now come into general use, and is universally acknowledged to be a success. So completely has it superseded the older system of treatment at Hanwell, that the name of one court, which in former days was called the Refractory Court, has lost its meaning. It has been arranged in grass-plots like the others; and we remarked, that some young shrubs which have recently been planted in it, and are left without any protection, remain perfectly uninjured, although in this court the very worst cases in the whole asylum take their daily exercise. All sorts of games—fives, cricket, football—are encouraged; the last-named is the favourite pastime, and even the heat of a July sun does not deter the patients from indulging in it. The interior of one asylum is very much like another. This vast building (in which we traversed between three and four miles of passages) is divided into a male and a female side; each under the charge of its own medical head, and its own general superintendent. Under these, there are assistant-surgeons and a large army of attendants, numbering about one hundred and twenty on the female side, and about seventy or eighty on the male. The stranger is quite as much struck here as at Bedlam by the quiet and orderly bearing of the patients—so completely at variance with the preconceived ideas of a madhouse—and the comfortable and contented manner in which the greater number of them settle down to their different occupations. Of course, the presence of a stranger in the asylum creates a certain amount of excitement, and he is beset by applications on the part of the inmates to use his influence for their release. Many and various are the reasons given by each petitioner why, in his or her particular case, it is only an act of simple justice and common-sense to effect this; but, curiously enough, each speaker is able to see, and ready with the utmost candour to admit, that all of his neighbours are mad, and that *their* detention is both just and expedient. One old lady adopted a different tone from the others. She appeared to enter into and actually to enjoy the humorous mistake that had been made in putting her among mad people. She told us with quiet irony, while occupied in folding up some linen that had just been washed in the laundry, how this mistake had originated: simply from the fact of her having a sister who was insane. The sister *was* insane; but she herself—as for her—why, ‘we could see for ourselves whether *she* was mad or not.’ The accusation was not even worthy of denial. She only treated it with good-natured contempt. Poor old woman! The mistake occurred thirty years ago, and her hair has changed from brown to gray while she has been repeating her sarcastic little story. The gates of the asylum will never close behind her now. But it was pleasant to hear her admit, that, except for the sake of having the little mistake cleared up, she would be sorry to leave the home where the greater part of her life had been passed. There are three other asylums in the immediate neighbourhood of London: Colney Hatch, which is rather larger even than Hanwell; St Luke’s Hospital; and the City of London Hospital for Lunatics, at Stone, near Dartford. Such is the provision which the county of Middlesex has made for its insane. It is impossible

to pay even a single visit to one of these asylums, and to look upon the helpless inmates, without feeling how insignificant is all physical suffering, compared with being bereft of the splendid gift of reason; but it is consolatory to know that every means which, in the present state of our knowledge, science can suggest, is made use of to alleviate the burden which they bear; and this is the more satisfactory, when we compare the present system and its results with the very opposite and less humane treatment to which the insane were until very lately subjected.

SHAM-JEWELLERY.

THE passion for jewellery has been a habit of mankind from the days of Solomon to those of the Shah. It was illustrated by the idolaters of Somnath; it blazed at the feet of the Esterhazies; it has culminated in the tiara and belt of Nasr-Shah-Eddin. This potentate made himself the cynosure of Europe by means of the diamonds flaming upon his aigrette, his breast, and the hilt and sheath of his scimitar; and so the subject of gems has been wonderfully upon the carpet lately. But with fashion comes ambition. People will wear glittering ornaments somehow, and prefer the false to none at all. In romance, these lustrous deceptions have played a high part, as in the story, by Dumas, of the *Three Musketeers*, where a brilliant bit of dissimulation saves Anne of Austria from disgrace. Everybody, too, has read tales of extravagant ladies pledging their genuine jewels and wearing shams for the deception of society. And the art has reached such perfection, that, apart from certain tests, which, of course, are impossible to apply, they really do deceive. In flash and splendour, the imitated are often scarcely inferior to the originals, whence, by the chemist's magic, they are copied. In dealing with this consummate kind of forgery, one preliminary remark has to be made. Jewels viewed in a natural, and jewels viewed in an artificial light, are, like certain sorts of beauty, not to be compared. There is a fluid radiance in them which wants refraction; the former take it from the sun, the latter from the chandelier. In the case of the peerless stone, however, the diamond, the object of the splendid illusion is to produce a perfectly colourless substance, thoroughly lucid, and capable of reflecting all lights. To this pebble—for it is nothing more—have been attributed many virtues; but it can be fabricated by science with a very near approach to reality. First, it is necessary to dissolve charcoal. Then follow processes requiring crystallisation—a mingling of pure water, a little carbonate of sulphur, and certain proportions of liquefied phosphorus. Still, all this may not yield a thoroughly deceptive diamond. Another composition is made from silver-sand, very pure potash, minium, calcined borax, and a form of arsenic, varied occasionally by a mixture of *strass*—a mixture for which an equivalent is *paste*, and which represents transparent pebbles burnt to powder, white-lead, and

other similar materials. Sometimes rock-crystal is used, with borax acid from Italy, and nitrate of potash. Of these materials is composed the false diamond, which figures so alluringly in the shop-windows of the Palais Royal.

Let us turn to the sapphire, the next esteemed among precious stones, even above the emerald and the ruby. It is a product of the East, though found, of inferior quality, in Bohemia, Saxony, and France among rocks of the secondary period. There are white sapphires, occasionally mistaken for diamonds; crimson or carmine, resplendent beyond description; vermilion, and topaz-tinted. Indeed, we may assign rank to the emerald as daughter of the sapphire. Do you covet them in order to beam with borrowed lustre at a ball? Take, as the cookery-books say, one ounce of paste, mix with two grains of precipitated oxide of cobalt, and there you have the coloured and glowing necklet, which none except a jeweller can detect. Supposing, however, that you desire ear-rings of chrysoberyl, or chrysopal—or *cymophane*, as the French term it, which means 'floating light'—the trifle is exceedingly pretty, with its surface of asparagus green and its heart of radiating fire. Yet it is to be emulated by a combination of aluminium, silica, oxide of iron, and lime.

Coming to the splendid gem, the ruby, whether of Brazil, Barbary, or Bohemia, with its cherry or purple red, varied by opalescent or milky aspects, there are various methods of rivalling it—with litharge and calcined shells; with paste, antimony, glass, and purple of Cassius; with white-sand, washed in hydrochloric acid, minium, calcined potash, calcined borax, and oxide of silver, stirred in a crucible. We are furnishing our jewel-box rapidly, and at a very moderate expense. But care must be taken lest, through an imprudent admixture, your fictitious ruby should suggest the idea of a garnet, which is a poor and unrecognisable relation of the family. The topaz has never been very fashionable in England; yet it is a charming gem in all its varieties—yellow, white, colourless—'drops of water' the Dutch lapidaries call these—orange, shining to little disadvantage among diamonds, 'red jonquil,' purple, red, blue, and violet. But it is unnecessary to search the rocks of Brazil, Saxony, or Bohemia to gain credit for wearing these bits of beautiful radiance. A little white-lead, with some shells of a rich tint, pulverised and calcined, will yield a composition of exquisite fire and tint, capable of being cut like the genuine gem. So will a mixture of antimony, glass, and ordinary jeweller's paste with purple of Cassius; but the best imitation of any is produced by a composition of white-sand, minium, burnt potash, burnt borax, and oxide of silver. This, with the necessary processes, is a somewhat costly preparation.

Far above the topaz, however, in point of splendour and value, ranks the emerald—not that of Brazil, or India, or Carthage, but the 'noble' quality discovered in Peru, among the valleys of New Granada, of a rich grass green, with a sort of velvet surface, unapproached by any other precious stone. There are, of course, several varieties—the sky-blue, the aquamarine, the corn-coloured, even the white; but they are not often imitated. The true *smaragdus* has been converted

almost into an object of worship. It has been exalted as an amulet in cases of epilepsy and insanity; its aid has been invoked for the detection of witches and hidden treasures; that of Mantu, indeed, was formerly termed the 'goddess.' Still, our chemist will, with paste, oxide of copper, and nitre of potash, create something wonderfully similar, or, more elaborately, he may employ numerous different materials, including the invaluable silver-sand. The true hyacinth of Ceylon, often confounded with the orange sapphire and the saffron topaz, and known also as the 'brown diamond,' can be counterfeited almost to perfection. So with the water sapphire, hyaline, the common amethyst, the 'smoke diamond' of Alençon, the cats' eye, and the agate. Onyx and coral need scarcely be enumerated. There is a notorious manufacture of onyx nearly all over Europe, from German pebbles, treated with acids; and the false can scarcely be distinguished from the true, except by their weight and price. We should recommend very great caution in purchasing what purports to be onyx. In no kind of precious stones is more deception practised. As regards coral, there are also false kinds as well as the reality. By the aid of the real or pink coral, many beautiful imitations are effected; sometimes with the assistance of diamond-dust, for application to mosaic, to furniture ornaments, and enamel. The opal is, in its way, peerless among precious stones, and the only one which, when extracted from the earth, as in Hungary, is soft, hardening and diminishing in size through exposure to the air. It is rarely larger, with its milk-blue beauty, illuminated by sun-tints, than a nut, but has always been marvellously esteemed. In fact, the flamboyant opal of Mexico, representing an admixture of silica, iron, and water, is a magnificent gem, and its family is mentioned in the Apocalypse as including 'the most noble of stones.' In consequence of their being excessively prized, and of a quickly fading nature, sham specimens are fabricated to an extraordinary extent.

Thus, also, with pearls, although by many they are preferred when they have lost their original whiteness. The rage for these has no limit. False pearls were invented in Paris towards the close of Henry IV.'s reign, by an ingenious fellow named Jaquin. Thence the manufacture spread into Italy, where it was extensively practised, though the French specimens retained their superiority. To begin with, were employed the scales of the blay, a small flat fish, with a green back and a white belly, common in numerous rivers of Europe. The scales are carefully scraped off, and repeatedly washed in pure water until they glisten like silver. They are then again washed in a sieve, inclosed in a net, and whipped into a pulp, though still retaining those rectangular particles which, to some extent distinguishable to the eye, constitute a high merit in genuine pearls. The mass thus formed was at one time known as 'essence of the East.' To it was added some gelatine, from the same fish. Glass of the most delicate texture, and powdered white wax, with a dash of mother-of-pearl, completed the operation, and the necklace of the demoiselle was ready for wearing. It needs only a slight additional chemistry to convert these pearls into opals—a kind of jelly made from parchment is added.

The rose-pearls of Turkey are formed by pounding fresh and young flowers in a mortar until they become a paste, spreading this on cloth, and laying

to partially dry in the sun. When nearly dry, they are pounded again in rose-water, then dried again, and so on until the paste is exceedingly fine, when it is rounded into shape, polished with rose-water, for the sake of lustre and scent, and thus becomes the pretty imposture celebrated as the rose-pearl. They are of various colours—black, for the white throats of Circassia; red, for beauty of a darker depth; blue, also for fairness; and a splendid amber, fit for all complexions, though chiefly for the brunette. Mock-pearls, it should be remarked, by the way, have been made from fruit, perfumed with storax and musk. The commerce in these fictitious decorations is principally French and Austrian, though something is known about it in our own honourable country. There is Japanese cement, there is rice-paste, and there are Roman pearls, made up of silver-sand, fish-scales, spirits of wine, and white wax. The Venetian pearls are generally vitreous, and little likely to deceive, yet they are sold by thousands of boxes throughout Europe, Asia, and the New World. The art employed is simply that of producing white glass in tubes, tinted, however, by a process which the Italians still claim as a secret, though the existence of any such mystery in our days may be doubted. These tubes, so to speak, are melted again, whirled into a globular shape, or sometimes manipulated in a softened condition into the spherical form, which, however, is occasionally produced by simply stirring the fragments of glass round and round in a vessel filled with warm sand and hot wood-ashes. Nothing now remains beyond collecting the pearls, blowing off the dust, stringing them on thick strings of silk, packing them in barrels, and exporting them far and wide throughout the world, only stopping short of the uninhabited islands. Enamel would come into our scope, with gilding, silvering, damascening, besides the alloy of coinage, but that the subject, however attractive, would attain to unmanageable proportions. These are among the most tender and delicate arts existing, and their culture has always accompanied the higher progress of civilisation. Enamelling is, in fact, the creation, rather than the imitation of a jewel, and calls upon the artist's taste and skill scarcely less than did the production of Ascanio's famous lily. The clouding and watering of metals, again, are artificial glosses upon nature, representing a subtle science; but it is in the fabrication of decorative insignia illustrating the various orders of chivalry in Europe, that the limits of ingenuity have been reached, with their mixture of false gems, their crucibles of colour, amaranthine enamels, bits of polished shell, and rays of burnished metal.

Thus, therefore, there is still a sort of alchemy practised in this world, for is it not a Rosicrucian art to manufacture diamonds, emeralds, rubies, opals, and pearls from the common elements of the earth, and convert the contents of a laboratory into sparkles which shall flash as though they were beautiful secrets surrendered by the too miserly mines of Golconda, or the Sinbad valleys of Brazil! The very light of heaven, the sunbeams themselves, have been entrapped and imprisoned by these mimetic jewellers. As for the result, what myriads of people are pleased in the indulgence of a little innocent vanity, without wearing one fortune on their heads, another round their necks, and a third upon their arms! It is not

the savage only who delights in baubles. Besides, do we not thus enjoy that which Marie Antoinette called the 'luxury' of wearing diamonds, without her 'torturing fear' of losing them?

LADY LIVINGSTON'S LEGACY.

CHAPTER XXVI.—HEIR-AT-LAW.

THERE is in all countries a brief and anxious interregnum between the death of one sovereign and the recognition of another. When the herald breaks his wand, and the biggest bells in minster towers shake the air with solemn tolling, the new monarch, in very much the plight of a freshly hatched birdling not quite extricated from the shell, passes some hours of discomfort. It is all very well for a few great officers of state to hurry panting into their prince's presence, and to vie with one another in their eager bestowal of the title of Majesty. But for awhile these fire-new honours are but awkwardly worn. Lord Chamberlains, Palace Marshals, and Bishops, high dignitaries as they are, do not constitute a people. The huzzas of the streets, the salvos of cannon, the sea of bared heads, the waving handkerchiefs in casement and balcony, the deep roar of the populace, the more decorous salutations of the notables of the realm, all these are needed before the new ruler feels at home in his royal saddle. As with a kingdom, so with an estate, and especially when the right to its fee-simple is liable at any instant to be disputed or denied.

John Fleming, Lady Livingston's heir-at-law, had been duly notified of the singular accident by which he found himself the successor of a relative between whom and himself there had been scanty sympathy, and had lost no time in hastening from Lincolnshire to London to attend to his own interests. He had indeed, as people averred, been engrossed in that occupation through life, and was one of those men whom nobody loves, and who probably fare worse in the general estimation than hundreds who are worse than they. He had steered his course, ever and always, by the beacon-light of strict legality, taking little heed of that immense unwritten jurisprudence of custom and tradition that with us in England so often override the dry letter of the law. We have heard Mrs Hart the housekeeper describe him as 'a covetous, creeping creature,' and although servants are apt to exaggerate our salient points, the verbal caricatures which they draw are often speaking portraits. A parsimonious gentleman was John Fleming, one who never, if he could help it, gave away a shilling, and who strove very hard to beat out every sixpence of his expenditure into a ninepenny power of purchasing. His income, mainly derived from land, was but a moderate one, yet he saved each year a satisfactory margin in ready cash. Perhaps no landowner in the county was more cordially detested by his tenantry. Those who tilled his small farms, rackrented, and let at yearly tenure, and the more dependent class that dwelt in the rows of cottages which he had built beside the fen-road, abhorred their prudent landlord more than they would have done some reckless spendthrift who drew all he could out of the shire for metro-

politan consumption. 'Sentimental considerations,' such was his favourite phrase, 'ought not to interfere with what was really a purely commercial transaction;' and accordingly it fared ill with those who were behindhand with the world, worse with the fever-stricken wretches who asked 'Squire Fleming' to banish ague and typhus from their damp and malarious abodes. It was but a Lilliputian property in that province of many-acred magnates, but its proprietor squeezed the sponge hard, and made the most of it.

It might, at first sight, have appeared as if John Fleming, being a bachelor who saved for the sake of saving, and who was self-denying in his habits, would scarcely have appreciated the windfall which had come in his way. Assuredly, the notion that he might succeed to Heavistree had very rarely crossed his mind. To whomsoever old Lady Livingston might bequeath her Warwickshire lands, it was certain that her cousin John, of Pinchbeck Priory, *co.* Lincoln, would not be the lucky legatee. He had arrived at a time of life when the character is formed, and was not likely to prove more indulgent to himself or others, because eight or nine thousand a year had suddenly dropped into his lap. 'He'll make no difference, I'll go bail,' had been the comment of his old cook, when the purport of 'Master's' journey to London had become the talk of the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, no young heir of many wants and wishes could, in the heyday of hot-blooded youth, be more hungry for an inheritance than was this cold, frugal, elderly expectant, whose meagre face and trim gray whiskers were soon familiar sights at Richmond.

He—John Fleming, lord of Pinchbeck—was very busy. He haunted Bedford Row, sending in his card perpetually to Mr Glegg, and waiting with meek determination, among the clerks, until the eminent family solicitor was at liberty to see him. He had his own lawyers, of a very different stamp to that of Goodeve and Glegg, Messrs Ferret and Pounce, of Thavies Inn, but though they were active in the matter, their activity was subdued by the caution of their principal. Hard men are not always hard with the useful attorneys who attend to their foreclosures and draw their covenants. Mr Fleming was so. Never a six-and-eightpence went into the bill of costs without his full knowledge and consent. He kept his legal hounds lean and fit to run, and never forgot to impress on them the advantage of having in him, despite his rigid economy, at least one respectable client, good to brag of among smaller fry. The one thing which John Fleming dreaded was, that Beatrice should go to law with him in defence of her rights under Lady Livingston's missing will. He should win—yes, of course he should win—but then the glorious uncertainty and delays of the law, and the fearful costs of court and costs in the cause, and Ferret and Pounce with their swingeing bill, scared him. The newspapers would get hold of him too, and he was averse to have the lurid glare of the *Lime-light* leading articles turned on him and his quiet, prim, blood-sucking ways. Something sensational would be made out of the well-born usurer from the Eastern Counties, coming up to assert his extreme claims against a girl who would have on her side the sympathies of the very judges who ruled against her; and as for costs as against poor Beatrice, why, Ferret and Pounce could hardly find the

wearer of a wig brazen-faced enough to ask for them.

Mr John Fleming, then, was very urbane to Beatrice his cousin, when he came down to Richmond. He took out his handkerchief, and snivelled, when he spoke to the tearful girl of her good friend departed. Lady Livingston, he said, had never quite understood him; he regretted it, but so it was, not but that he had always strongly desired that concord and amity should reign between his unworthy self and one so noble and excellent as was the dowager. Her property had now devolved on himself, her natural and nearest heir. But he begged, he did earnestly beg, that Miss Beatrice Fleming would consider herself, for the present, as much at home at the Fountains as during the lifetime of her benefactress. Pray, let her take her own time, and consult her own convenience, as to her plans and her future place of residence! His only wish was to lighten, so far as he could, the affliction under which she, very naturally, suffered. Perhaps she would think the matter over. Till she had come to a decision, by all means let her consider the house as hers.

The heir-at-law was more peremptory, although scarcely less soft-spoken, in his intercourse with the dowager's old servants. He had not, as yet, taken out letters of administration, and could not exercise full power in the mansion. But he was a thorn in the domestics' flesh, and a vexation to their spirits. The butler had a bad time of it over the cellar-book, finding himself, for the first time since he drew corks, confronted by an authority who boggled over every gap in the bins, who was incredulous as to the drafts on the contents of the sherry-crypt, and who instituted cold-blooded calculations as to the time in which ale-casks should be emptied, and as to the number of bottles laid down from a pipe of claret. 'Mr John' pored over the accounts, disallowing, by anticipation, many an item. He gave provisional warning to every one; docked the fat horses of their oats; put the servants on board wages; and gave it clearly to be understood that all would be paid up to the day of legal notice, but that pensions and gratuities were wholly beside the mark.

Sadly changed was the hospitable mansion in those days. The ghost of the nabob, flitting about the house that he had planned to build for years and years, among the sweltering heats on the yellow Indian plains, must have been doubly discontented to behold the alteration. It was as if the life-blood of the place was congealed by the chill touch of frost. The Fountains, from which the house took its name, no longer spouted into the air their glancing columns and clouds of sparkling spray. John Fleming had 'spoken' to the water company. No more did the gas-lamps in the lodge-gates and carriage-drive burn brightly at eve. Almost every ounce of the massive silver-plate had been locked up in cupboards, under the seal of Ferret and Pounce. The cellar was locked too. No gardeners worked in the grounds. The old carriage-horses vainly pricked up their ears, and whinnied deprecatingly when some one approached the empty corn-chest. Men in rusty black went from room to room, cataloguing, with noisy pencils, in metallic note-books, every saleable scrap of portable property. Never a basin of soup, never a scuttle of coals, never a weekly half-crown, nor a bunch of grapes, went to even the poorest, or the

most ailing, or the most aged of kind Lady Livingston's army of pensioners. The footmen had brushed the powder out of their ambrosial hair, and merely wore their livery to save wear-and-tear to their private suits of mufti.

Very sad was the life which Beatrice now led, and the continued residence at the Fountains would have been irksome to her, even had Mr Fleming's polite anxiety to get rid of her been less transparent. But then there arose before the bereaved girl the ugly problem—whither should she go? Poor as she was now, with some pitiful seventy pounds a year of her own, what could she do? Her reliance upon her late dear friend had been absolute; and now she found herself almost literally without shelter. Beatrice had not been accustomed to pass the whole of her time, certainly, beneath the dowager's roof; but she was now to learn the bitter lessons of actual misfortune, and to find for how much she had been indebted to the goodwill of her who was gone. No invitations reached her now. Of old they had been plenty. Not, let me hasten to say, that Miss Fleming's acquaintances, like some ruined gamester's friends in an eighteenth-century comedy, turned their backs on her in her adversity. The wearers of purple and fine linen are not devoid of hearts, only a little thoughtless, by reason of their being lapped warmly from rough blasts of evil fortune. Had it not been 'the season,' Beatrice might have had the eight months' run of a dozen country-houses. But nobody wants visitors in London. Wherefore, Her Grace of Snowdon, and twenty other ladies belonging to that social pyramid of which Snowdon's duchess was the apex, penned very kind notes to Miss Fleming, but did not ask her to come to them in Belgravia. The Hon. and Rev. Augustus Fleming and his wife, struggling people, who could ill afford the rent of their house and the jobmaster's charge for their horses, had been used to receive Beatrice for a few weeks during the summer carnival of London, and to take her with them into 'society,' at the dowager's request. But the dowager's request had always been backed by the dowager's cheque-book; and now that Lady Livingston's purse could no longer be made available, the Hon. and Rev. Augustus, and his pains-taking spouse, and his two rawboned girls, made no sign as of giving houseroom to their orphan cousin.

Yet, she must go forth from her old home; but whither? She almost envied Violet Maybrook, who was of course to go too, but whose strong and self-reliant nature fitted her by far the best of those two for taking an active share in life's battle. Violet was accomplished and well instructed, and with the recommendation of Mrs General Buckram and the other lady-fossils of Hampton Court, could not long be without an engagement as governess or companion. With Beatrice the case was widely different. There are young women, as there are young men, of whom we feel assured that, in case of pecuniary mishap, they will fall, somehow, on their feet. There are others for whom we predicate the worst ills of poverty, shorn lambs all too tender for the bleak hillside.

'I don't think, if I tried to be a governess, that any one would have me,' Beatrice had said, more than once, since she had realised what her prospects really were. And indeed she was but a luckless outsider in that race in which highly certificated teachers, elaborately trained for the profession,

demure Minervas reared at colleges, and steeped in ologies to the very rims of their blue spectacles, enter for the hundred guinea Nursery Stakes.

Towards Beatrice, the respect and the affection of the angry servants remained unwavering. Mutineers as they were in their demeanour towards the hateful heir-at-law, and chronic as was their grumbling at the stinted housekeeping, they waited on the adopted daughter of their generous old mistress with a zeal that was to the credit of human nature. Sorely disappointed as they were that the dowager's presumed intestacy cut them off from their legitimate hopes of pay and pension, they were reverent and tender in their mention of the dead. And it is a fact that they were more perturbed at Miss Fleming's being 'kep' out' of what they firmly believed to be her rights, than at the loss of that annual gift on which some of them, grown frail in service, looked as to a crutch for decrepit age. Mr Glegg, who now 'acted,' as he called it, for Beatrice, came down once and again to see her; and it may have been due to the bold front which he presented to the common enemy, that John Fleming's hints regarding the propriety of his kinswoman's departure were not more pressing. He was sorry for her, and said so. Mr Glegg even offered, at his own costs and charges, to commence proceedings in a court of law, the result of which would be to postpone for months Mr Fleming's assumption of an owner's claims over the heritage.

'Of course, my dear young lady, it's only a question of time,' the lawyer had said; 'he must beat us in the long-run; but we can traverse every plea, and with counter-affidavits, and a demurrer to the main issue, can throw the thing into a future term; ay, and cost the mean hound a trifle of his darling money too.'

But of this, though grateful to Mr Glegg for his championship, Beatrice would not hear. There was no will forthcoming, nor would she avail herself of any legal chicanery to hamper the wheels of Mr John Fleming's triumphal chariot.

Yet her mind must be made up, and that speedily. The old ladies at Hampton Court, Mrs General Buckram and the rest, would have shared their crust with her, say for a fortnight apiece; and Mr Glegg did induce his buxom red-faced wife to write to Miss Fleming, asking her to spend a month at the 'Lodge'; but she was in no mood for a peripatetic existence of this sort, and all these well-meant offers were thankfully declined. Dashwood's sullen silence remained unbroken. Even Oswald Charlton, who had once visited the Fountains since the memorable occasion of the funeral, now seemed, so Beatrice thought, to have forgotten her. Well, well! It was better, perhaps, that it should be so. No happiness could accrue from any renewal of their former intimacy. She was still bound by her promise to Dashwood, and even were that barrier no longer in existence, she could not expect her former lover to sacrifice his ease and his prospects for the sake of taking to his home a penniless bride. Yet it was with joy that she at length received a letter from Oswald, announcing that he should be at Richmond on the morrow, and expressing a strong desire for some conversation with her. She wrote her answer, and despatched it. Worldly prudence, self-depreciation, were forgotten. She should see him, at anyrate, once again.

CHAPTER XXVII.—TWO FAIR OFFERS.

'A lady, miss, wishing to see you, please!' said a voice, the owner of which wore a cap, trimmed for the nonce with black ribbons, and a spotless apron over a frock of that peculiar-like print which seems to be manufactured expressly for the wear of the English female servant.

'A lady? What lady?' asked Violet wearily. She was growing very weary, in these latter days, of the world, not, indeed, with the thorough weariness that weighs down the old and the worn-out, but to as great an extent as was compatible with her youth.

'I think, miss, it is her as came down, formerly, to give the music-lessons,' answered the girl, who was a raw, new under-housemaid, one of the recruits who from time to time were sent up from the Heavittree estate to be drilled and taught by Mrs Hart the housekeeper.

'Miss Larpent? Certainly, I will see her,' said Violet, after a moment's hesitation: 'in the library, Susan, if you will say so.'

But the girl shook her beribboned head. 'Those lawyer gentlemen are a-writing there, miss,' she said: 'he as they call Ferret, and acts up to it, poking about with his ugly face all over the house; and a clerk of his; and Brickman the auctioneer. And Mr John—though he be no master o' mine, for all he orders and nags—is writing in the blue drawing-room along with t'other 'torney. But there's no one in the dining-room just now.'

Wherefore, Violet Maybrook gave audience to the companion of her infancy, Aphy Larpent, in the great room where the nabob's feasts had been spread in the old days of hard drinking and heavy feeding, and where of late the mourners at Lady Livingston's funeral had assembled. To witness the meeting, it might have been thought that the two had exchanged characters; for Violet's rare beauty and stately presence were clouded by the lassitude which had of late crept over her, whereas the elf's eyes sparkled as with the hidden fires that glow beneath the surface of the opal, and her gliding movements were quicker and more assured than was usual with her.

'Your hand burns, Vi, like fire: you are not ill?' asked the young music-mistress as she touched the palm which Miss Maybrook mechanically laid within her grasp.

'Ill! No; I am well enough,' answered Violet, with indifference.

Was she one to complain, and to such a one as the false creature before her, of the long, long watches of the night, spent in sleepless, feverish unrest, of the haunting past, the brooding future, the intolerable present, the weight of care, of rage, and of regret, which are for those who do wrong on earth what were the fabled Eumenides of old Greece! Nor, in very truth, was she ill. These rich natures, full of life, fraught with a potency of enjoyment or of suffering, can bear a very great strain before the chain snaps.

'You did not come here, old friend, to inquire as to my health, did you? I must wait until it pleases you to explain what you would have of me,' she added coldly, as she signed to her visitor to be seated.

'Upon my word, your reception is not a very encouraging one, and some people would take huff,

and go as they came,' returned the elf, with her hard mocking little laugh; 'but we have known one another a very long time, and are privileged. I merely ran down to-day, my dear, to say how glad I should be, as, of course, you cannot stay in these diggings—can you?—if you would come to me. I'm lonely, since Bruce went, as you may guess; so it is half-selfish, after all, is my errand.'

'Half-selfish!' Violet repeated those words, unconscious that she did so, and tried, with some success, to shake off the languor that dulled her usually clear brain. When had she known, since the early days of dolls and sweetmeats, Aphrodite Larpent to be actuated by any motive that could not be directly traced to some mean impulse! But what, in this instance, could be her object? That was not so plain. 'You know, I suppose, Aphy, that I have but my small savings, and shall be very poor,' said Violet at length.

'Poor; and so am I,' answered the other promptly; 'but then two women can live on what a man would fling away on cabs and cigars. There is Bruce's old room at your service. You and I will live as frugally as a couple of country mice that have strayed into this great splendid capital of London, to make money if we can, not to waste it. I shall teach music to any one who will be good enough to patronise me; and you will give morning lessons to pupils, I daresay, until you can hear of something better. If I were to say how pleased I should be to set up housekeeping with a very old friend like yourself, you wouldn't believe me. And yet, Vi, dear, it is true.'

This was very well said, well and naturally, and it would probably have obtained credence from nine men out of ten. But one woman does not see another through the illusory haze of sentimental preference which dims the perception of either sex where the other is concerned. Violet Maybrook was not one fraction nearer to putting trust in the disinterested affection of her early playmate than she had been before Aphrodite's pretty speech was so prettily spoken. But, after a moment's thought, she decided within herself what her answer should be. What possible harm, after all, could such neighbourhood do to her? The hold which Aphy had upon her would be as efficacious for harm, perhaps more so, at a distance than when they two should be together. And the instinct that had formerly made her shrink from Bruce's sister had gradually become very much weakened.

'Come—it's a fair offer,' said Aphrodite, who watched her narrowly.

'And I accept it, Aphy,' returned Violet slowly; 'accept it, I am sure, in the spirit in which it is made.' As she spoke, a figure passed the window towards which her face was turned. She started. 'Mr Charlton again!' she said; 'I thought he would come no more. People, except birds of ill omen, like those busy instruments of the new owner who now pervade the house, seem to keep very much aloof from the Fountains now. Yet it was Lord Livingston's nephew, I am certain.'

Oswald Charlton it was whose figure had in passing the window attracted the notice of Miss Maybrook, and we may as well follow him to the small yellow drawing-room, which had been the dowager's favourite apartment during the winter months. The rest of the house was delivered over to an incursion of Goths from Thavies Inn, and

of Vandals from the auction-mart, cataloguing, appraising, inspecting, whatsoever might appear likely to bring a good price by public competition. But the yellow drawing-room had been one of the earliest rooms to be subjected to this invasion of 'Mr John's' satellites, and there Beatrice Fleming was able to receive Oswald without much prospect of their conversation being interrupted by the rush of greasy Hebrews with patent pencils and bulging pocket-books.

'I am very glad that you could see me to-day,' said Oswald, making up his mind to break the somewhat awkward silence that prevailed after the first commonplace words of greeting had been said; 'and the more so because, as I suppose, you will not remain here, now, very long.'

'It was very kind of you—to—to think of me,' returned Beatrice shyly, and, in spite of herself, her lip trembled a very little, and there were tears in her eyes. Up to that moment, there had been between these two young persons an embarrassing consciousness of the restraint of their present position. True-lovers, forbidden any longer to speak on the topic of love, are wretched conversationists, each knowing that from his or her lips mere platitudes sound doubly trite. But now, as he noted the suppressed signs of the emotion which Beatrice could not quite hide, he found his tongue at last, and spoke out boldly enough.

'To think of you!' he exclaimed. 'When do I not think of the prize I hoped to win, and lost, of what I loved so dearly, but that was beyond my reach! Do not be alarmed, I beg of you,' he added, more gently, as he saw that Beatrice was startled by his vehemence; 'I did not come to disturb your grief by dwelling on my own selfish sorrows. But remember that I never promised not to love you, dearest—that would have been beyond my power. What I really did engage to do was, to keep aloof, and that I have done. I should not have been here to-day, were it not for the great and sudden loss which you have had to bear, and to which ought not to be added that lesser loss, the deprivation of what is justly yours.'

'Nothing is mine,' said Beatrice, with an unsuccessful attempt to smile, 'nothing, now. I never knew how rich I was until I found myself alone in the world. But indeed it is not the money that I regret.'

'No; it is natural,' answered Oswald, 'that while the smart of your recent grief is still fresh, your thoughts should dwell solely on the memory of her whom you have lost. Young as you are, and free, hitherto, from sordid thoughts and cares, mere poverty seems dwarfed by the anguish that has gone before. And yet, believe me, many as are the temptations that enervate the rich, it is not always well to be poor. There are natures that grow sour and hard in adversity, and others, of a more gentle stamp, that fade and wither in an uncongenial atmosphere of anxiety and want. It is no light thing for you, young, well nurtured, and delicate, to be flung thus unprotected among strangers; for, so far as I know, your own resources must be indeed small.'

'How can I help that?' said Beatrice, this time smiling through her tears. 'I mean to be very brave, and to make myself useful, if I can. I have something of my own, a little, and perhaps, if I am not thought clever enough to teach, I might still

do something to eke it out. I can draw and paint, not very well, I daresay, but I should be contented with very humble gains. And I do not want very much.'

Oswald Charlton shook his head very sadly. 'You scarcely know, I fear,' he said, 'what difficulties await the poor lady who tries to turn her accomplishments into bread-winning arts. I have seen, unfortunately, only too much of these experiments: the pretty sketches sold for what barely paid the cost of colours and Bristol-board; the dainty lace, over which its maker had half blinded herself, purchased at a price so low that its offer appeared an insult; the illuminated book, the gay embroidery, vainly hawked from shop to shop. All honour to those who try to work, and to live by work, in the hour of affliction, but the market for such wares as these is terribly overstocked. But I did not come to prove myself a croaking prophet of evil,' he added more cheerfully; 'I came to say that I have turned the matter of the disappearance of the will over in my head, and am quite convinced that it is in existence, and that it is in the hands of this Davis, or Larpent, or whatever the man's real name may be.'

'But Mr Glegg was certain it had been—destroyed,' pleaded Beatrice; 'and I think so too. Had it been in the house here, it must have been found.'

'Mr Glegg,' answered Charlton, 'though a shrewd solicitor, is not infallible, and the less so, because his habitual turn of thought disposes him to accept the most ordinary and prosaic solution of every one of those riddles which life presents us. And even he was staggered, and admitted himself to be so, by some of the arguments which I advanced when we yesterday discussed the question. I need not weary you with my reasons. I have only come to say, that I will spare no toil, no trouble, no cost within the limits of a poor man's purse, to bring that missing will to light, and to right the cruel wrong under which I firmly believe you to be suffering.'

'But your profession, your prospects'—Beatrice began; but the young man, half playfully, cut short her expostulation.

'My profession, as you are aware,' he said, 'is not my sole means of support. And as regards my prospects, why, I am young enough to afford to be put back, as it were, for a space in the race of life, and to allow myself to be outstripped by my juniors of a year or so. I must work doubly hard, later on, to make up for lost time. But of one thing I am resolved: Heavitree Hall and its acres, and the rest of the property, shall go to the true owner. And the true owner is not Mr John Fleming. The will exists. It has been stolen. And I will find it, and reinstate my good aunt's lawful heiress in the position that is justly hers.'

'But granting that you prove successful,' rejoined Beatrice timidly, 'have you considered the results of your very success: I should be still bound, still betrothed, to Frederick Dashwood. Nor is it in his nature not to claim a rich wife. He would come to demand the fulfilment of the pledge, and I could not gainsay him. Would it not be better, far better, to let the property go, and to leave me quiet in my obscurity?'

The young barrister rose from his chair, walked to the window, and stood gazing out for some moments. And yet he did not see the driving

cloud-rack, nor the rose-trees in their wealth of bloom, nor the green of the tall grass that flourished, unmown, on the once trim lawn. Might it not be true that in seeking the restoration of Beatrice Fleming's rights, he was really working for the man to whom he felt so rooted an aversion, for Sir Frederick Dashwood! No doubt but that the mercenary baronet would be deterred by no scruples from claiming Beatrice as his bride. To recover the fortune which, by fraud or accident, had been lost, was to condemn the girl he loved to a life of wedded misery. His own chance, too, poor and feeble as it was, would then be utterly extinguished.

But there was too much nobility of soul in Oswald Charlton to permit him to weigh his own hopes, his own longings, in the scales wherein he sought to strike the balance of Beatrice Fleming's welfare. He had no security that, even now, Dashwood might not persist in his design. And the idea of that tender girl as the ill-treated wife of a needy and fierce profligate, as the victim of his savage or sullen humours, and a target for the insolence of incensed creditors, all but maddened him. Better than such a lot as that would be gilded chains, such as polite Hymen occasionally forges for civilised wear. Should the property be recovered, and should the baronet prove intractable, it would be easy for judicious friends to prepare such settlements as should render Miss Fleming's fortune-hunting cousin dependent on his wife's good-will for the supplies which his extravagance required. This was but a dismal form of relief, but it was better than the too probable alternative. It would be very bad that Beatrice should become a governess, exposed, it might be, to the caprice or tyranny of purse-proud employers. It would be worse to contemplate her becoming the nominal mistress of a bankrupt establishment, and the joyless slave of a bad husband. He thought over all these things, and his mind was made up.

'Come what may, dear Beatrice,' he said aloud, 'I will loyally do my duty by you. Consider what my poor aunt would feel, did she know that that precious kinsman of hers, now engaged in calculating the utmost profit that he can make by selling to the highest bidder every object that was to her as a dumb friend, was able to turn her chosen heiress out of the mansion that is hers of right! The wishes of the dead should be held sacred, surely, in this case, as in others. Lady Livingston's intentions on your behalf were matter of public notoriety, nor ought they to be frustrated, while I, at anyrate, have health and strength to carry them out.—What is that?'

For at that instant there was a tap at the door, and the old butler, who had committed the solecism of knocking, came gliding into the room, with his impassable face and noiseless tread, bearing, on a salver chased with the Livingston arms and coronet, a letter with a deep black edge. Long after the old servant had withdrawn, Beatrice remained with this letter in her hand, unopened, as if she feared to break the seal. When she did do so, she read as follows:

DEAR COUSIN—I never wrote to you before, nor have we ever met, so that the face, and the handwriting, and the very name, perhaps, of your present correspondent are likely to be equally unfamiliar to you. The signature of Catherine Dashwood might not at once introduce me, as what

I am, the widow of Philip Dashwood. My poor husband, you may have heard, was the eldest son of old Sir George, and would have been now the baronet, but for his early death in Canada. You may possibly have heard something of my story, and of the loss of my dear little boy, a year since, by drowning. He was all I had left in the world, and I am a desolate, heart-broken woman, and, I am afraid, but dull company. I mention this, not to parade my own sorrows, which are, after all, of a character every day to be met with, but to prepare you for a very quiet and uneventful routine of life, should you accept my invitation. And now for the invitation itself. Had you been, as was at first supposed, the wealthy and envied heiress of my old friend, Lady Livingston, I should not have cast the black shadow of my mourning across your joyous and prosperous young life. As it is, grief naturally feels a fellowship with grief, and in the belief that you are now for the moment without a home, I write to ask you to share mine. To come to me will be to confer, not to incur an obligation. Although far from being rich, I am fairly well provided with worldly goods, and excepting some old relations who had grown almost to forget me during the years I spent out of England, I have none to love me. It should not be my fault if I did not earn some little liking on your part.

We are, as you know, connected by affinity, if not by blood, and I have received old kindness from some of your race and name, which may, I trust, serve as an excuse for the liberty which I, a stranger, presume to take. I make you my offer, such as it is, frankly and freely, not disguising from myself, or from you, that life beneath my roof may prove to one like yourself to be monotonous and melancholy. I own that I should be sadly disappointed, should you refuse me, and yet I am not selfish enough to regret it, should your refusal be prompted by the fact, that brighter prospects lie before you, and that I have been misinformed. And remember that if you decide on coming to me here, you remain free as air, to stay, or to leave me when you will, in the very probable case of your becoming tired of me, although, if you are what I remember you in childhood—you have forgotten, of course, seeing Mrs Philip Dashwood, on her only visit to her native country for long years—I should not easily grow tired of you. Your room—you see I have taken possession of you by anticipation—is ready, and at any rate there is nothing gloomy about it, or about the externals of the house, whatever its mistress may be. From your windows, through the screen of the rose-creepers, and between the trees, you can see the blue waves breaking in a long line of foam on the sunny beach. If you will come at once to occupy it, you will greatly please your sincere well-wisher and friend, CATHERINE DASHWOOD.

*This was all, with the exception of a postscript, sending a kind message of remembrance to Miss Maybrook, and of the date and address. The latter was that of Whitborne, one of the prettiest and least frequented watering-places on the south coast.

'I never,' said Oswald, as he folded and laid down the letter, which Beatrice, having first read its contents, had handed to him for perusal, 'heard anything but good of this Mrs Philip Dashwood. Sorrow, at all events, has not made her selfish. But, as regards this offer of hers'—

'I shall accept it,' answered Beatrice, whose eyes were again swimming in tears. 'I have not so many friends left to me that I can afford to reject the kind hand held out to me in the very moment when I seem most to need it. Yes, I will go; and, if she will let me, we shall be very dear friends. I am sure I shall not feel myself a stranger there. And it is time that I should go, for this dear, dear old house is no longer a home for me, and I am daily made to know that I am a trespasser here.'

'Not for long, however,' said Oswald Charlton, affecting a cheery confidence which he was far from experiencing, as he rose to say farewell. 'Wrong, as the nursery saw says, will come right, be sure, one day. I wish I were as certain of being Lord Chancellor, as I am that the missing will exist, and can be traced out, if only the seeker holds to his quest tenaciously enough. Whitborne is not very far off, too, and I shall crave Mrs Dashwood's permission to come down, now and then, to report progress. And now, though it is hard to say it—good-bye, dear, dear Beatrice; good-bye!' He pressed her hand in his, turned quickly away, and he was gone.

ODDS AND ENDS:

FROM DR ROBERT CHAMBERS'S SCRAP-BOOK.

RIDING OFF.—'Betty,' said a mistress one morning to her servant, 'why did you stay out so late last night? You were to be in at nine, and were not at home till ten o'clock.' Betty denies the imputation. She does not say a word about not being in at nine, but asserts in a tone of virtuous indignation that she was home at three minutes to ten, and enters into an explanation of having heard the clock strike when she was going up-stairs to bed. She could point out the precise step in the stair where she was when the hall-clock began to strike. Worn out with the specious defence, the mistress gives the thing up. On the alleged error of three minutes in the accusation, Betty has made out her case of being an ill-used woman. In high quarters, this ingenious but not very honest practice of raising a false argument is called 'riding off.' In the department of society to which Betty belongs, it is better known as the art of 'bamboozling.' One day, at a court for the recovery of small debts in Edinburgh, there occurred a droll instance of a servant-girl trying to bamboozle Judge Macfarlane. She had been out all night without leave, and when she appeared next morning she was instantly discharged. Forthwith she raises an action for recovery of wages and board-wages till the end of her appointed term of service. Her master appears in defence, and briefly explains the circumstances. 'What do you say to this statement?' asks Macfarlane. Knowing that denial was vain, the girl went off on a new argument. 'Sir,' said she, addressing the bench, 'that man there, my master, is owing my mother for a pound of butter, and'— 'We do not want to hear anything about your mother and her butter,' shouted the judge; 'is it true that you were out all night without leave; that is the question?' 'Weel, I'm coming to that, sir; but I first wanted to speak to you about how ill my mother has been used about the butter.' 'Go away,' was the response; 'the case is dismissed!' Laughter, as reporters would say, in which Macfarlane joins.

DESTRUCTION OF BOOKS.—Amongst the influences at work for the destruction of books, one is not generally thought of—that intense love of books, called bibliomania. A regular collector, obtaining a superior copy of a scarce book, will destroy the first and inferior copy in his library, that his new possession may have as little rivalry as possible. Collectors of works of art likewise destroy scarce objects of *virtu*, for the same reason. A poet would say, love tends to destroy its objects; but is the passion of such men really love? Are these collectors not mere egotists, eager for the notoriety or glory of possessing unique or very rare articles.

NAMING A CHILD.—One evening, at the house of Dr Arnott (1853), Mr Rowland Hill gave some curious traits of the wretched ignorance of a population of nailers in some central district of England with which he was acquainted. A clergyman exerted himself to effect an improvement, and took particular care to get their children baptised. One day, having come to baptise a newly born infant, whom he understood to be a boy, he asked what name he should give the child. The father was quite at a loss, had no predilections on the subject. 'Shall it be a Scripture name?' Assent. 'Well, what Scripture name?' The man agreed at the minister's suggestion, that Benjamin would do. As he was retiring afterwards, he heard a great shouting, and turning back, met the father, who exclaimed: 'Sir, it wunna do—it maun be done again—the *bairn's* a *wench*!'

JOCULARITY OVERDONE.—(May 21, 1853.) I have been much pleased with the following remarks in Ruskin's *Modern Painters*: 'The chief bar, I suppose, to the action of imagination, and stop to all greatness in this present age of ours, is its mean and shallow love of jest; so that if there be in any good and lofty work a flaw, failing, or undipped vulnerable part, where sarcasm may stick or stay, it is caught at, and pointed at, and buzzed about, and fixed upon, and stung into, as a recent wound is by flies; and nothing is ever taken seriously or as it was meant, but always, if it may be, turned the wrong way, and misunderstood; and while this is so, there is not, nor cannot be, any hope of achievement of high things; men dare not open their hearts to us, if we are to broil them on a thorn-fire.'

The above is most true. Banter reigns everywhere, even amongst the scientific men. I often deplore it, even while I to some extent join in it. It seems to me that the physical prosperity of our age and nation is the principal cause. Another lies in the peculiar religious state of the world; no longer a sincere vital faith in the old, and yet nothing satisfactory in the new. There are earnest people too—earnest in piety, earnest in philanthropic schemes, earnest in politics; but the tendency is to behold them as set aside from the main current—respectable eccentricities at the best. There is a sad want of real satisfaction in all this crackling of thorns under the pot, and I deem it far from unlikely that there was more happiness among the wretched multitude following their leaders in the Holy Land in the twelfth century, or in the poor host of Scottish enthusiasts who met on Dunse Law—nay, even in many men perishing in Dunnottar Castle, or standing under the gallows in the Grassmarket—than there is among our prosperous people of the present day,

who have everything but a faith, and are fain to make matter of mirth out of every honest emotion that goes beyond the tone of polite society. [Since the above was noted twenty years ago, the practice of treating subjects jocularly has become considerably more common, till at length it amounts to a kind of pollution of literature, particularly the literature of fiction. It cannot be doubted that for this, the fashion set by certain popular writers is partly accountable.]

DISCOVERY.—The reward of the discoverer in natural science is, in all contingencies, great. To stand, as it were, between God and man—in the laboratory, the mine, the study—anywhere, and feel that within the few by-past minutes there has stolen into his mind what has hitherto been known to God alone—to reflect further on the many born and unborn who are to take this truth into their bosoms as part of their sense of that primal mystery—is a privilege so high, and a pleasure so overwhelming, as to sink into utter insignificance not merely the toils of research, but all the emanations of jealousy and prejudice which so often attend the first coming of truths before the world.

A BUILDER'S SPECULATION.—A few nights ago (1853), at a friend's house in London, a gentleman amused the company by giving an account of the anxiety of a builder engaged in large building speculations at Birkenhead, to obtain the services of a noted preacher in Liverpool as pastor in a church there. His object, of course, was to popularise the place, and get customers for his houses. He accordingly went to this famed preacher, and offered him two thousand pounds a year to come over to Birkenhead. The offer being rejected, he told my informant that if he could have secured such an attractive pulpit orator, 'it would have been worth three shillings a foot to all the new streets!'

CHINAISM.—We laugh at the reluctance of the Chinese to alter old arrangements, and wonder at their obstinacy in not adopting customs which are known to be valuable in our own country. But there is a good deal of this Chinaism in England. It is remarkable how debates will take place regarding the propriety of adopting certain plans, or establishing certain institutions, as if they were new and difficult matters; when they are all the time flourishing as part of the venerable institutions of other countries, perhaps countries close at hand, or indeed part of the same imperial state. The system of registering rights to heritable property, has, for instance, been keenly objected to as something very dreadful; so has the proposal of establishing a public prosecutor for crime, been viewed as a dangerous innovation; though both these practices have been in use and highly esteemed for hundreds of years in Scotland. One would think that the intercourse between the north and south part of Great Britain was very small, whereas the reverse is the case. If they were completely shut up from the knowledge of each other, there could not be less benefit from the example of each other's institutions. The remark is illustrated very effectively at what took place a few nights ago at the house of a friend in London (1853). The subject of discussion was Tenant Right on grounds which shewed that they were hardly aware of the lease system of Scotland. On my explaining how it worked, several of the company spoke of it as a thing still hypothetical, and which remained to be

tested by experiment, whereas it is a system which has worked well for generations. [A proper knowledge of the Scottish land tenure system, by which the rights of landlords and tenants are mutually and satisfactorily respected, might have obviated legislation on Tenant Right in Ireland.]

A DISEASE-DESTROYING TREE.

THE following paragraph appeared lately in the *Medical Times and Gazette*, and has been copied into some of the daily newspapers:

'M. Gimbert, who has been long engaged in collecting evidence concerning the Australian tree, *Eucalyptus globulus*, the growth of which is surprisingly rapid, attaining, besides, gigantic dimensions, has addressed an interesting communication to the Academy of Sciences. This plant, it now appears, possesses an extraordinary power of destroying miasmatic influence in fever-stricken districts. It has the singular property of absorbing ten times its weight of water from the soil, and of emitting antiseptic camphorous effluvia. When sown in marshy ground, it will dry it up in a very short time. The English were the first to try it at the Cape, and within two or three years they completely changed the climatic condition of the unhealthy parts of the colony. A few years later, its plantation was undertaken on a large scale in various parts of Algeria. At Pardock, twenty miles from Algiers, a farm situated on the banks of the Hamyze was noted for its extremely pestilential air. In the spring of 1867, about 13,000 of the eucalyptus were planted there. In July of the same year—the time when the fever-season used to set in—not a single case occurred; yet the trees were not more than nine feet high. Since then, complete immunity from fever has been maintained. In the neighbourhood of Constantine, the farm of Ben Machydlin was equally in bad repute. It was covered with marshes both in winter and summer. In five years, the whole ground was dried up by 14,000 of these trees, and farmers and children enjoy excellent health. At the factory of the Gue de Constantine, in three years a plantation of eucalyptus has transformed twelve acres of marshy soil into a magnificent park, whence fever has completely disappeared. In the island of Cuba, this and all other paludal diseases are fast disappearing from all the unhealthy districts where this tree has been introduced. A station-house at one of the ends of a railway viaduct in the department of the Var was so pestilential that the officials could not be kept there longer than a year. Forty of these trees were planted, and it is now as healthy as any other place on the line. We have no information as to whether this beneficent tree will grow in other than hot climates. We hope that experiments will be made to determine this point. It would be a good thing to introduce it on the west coast of Africa.'

The statement so given appears to require some modification. When mentioning that the tree in question has 'the singular property of absorbing ten times its weight of water from the soil,' we should have been told the length of time taken to perform the operation—a day, a week, or how long. All trees whatsoever absorb moisture from the soil, equal to their own weight in a certain period of time, some more than others, and the *Eucalyptus globulus* may in this respect only offer a more than

usually favourable specimen. We wish the account given had been more precise, and, for practical purposes, more trustworthy. All trees not only absorb moisture from the ground, but are useful in drying up marshy places, by means of exhalation. The fir tribe being evergreen, are for this purpose invaluable. Exhaling from all points, they send off moisture into the atmosphere, where it is dispersed by winds, and which, when condensed by cold, falls down as rain. Hence, plantations of firs not only dry the land, but beneficially water it; the two phenomena united being productive less or more of improved sanitary conditions. We shall be glad to hear on good authority that the *Eucalyptus globulus*, if planted in this country, will realise all that is said of its superior properties.

WINTER.

THOU dark-robed man with solemn pace,
And mantle muffled round thy face,
Like the dim vision seen by Saul,
Upraised by spells from Death's dark hall:
Thou sad small man—face thin and old,
Teeth set, and nose pinched blue with cold,
Ne'er mind! Thy coat, so long and black,
And fitting round thee all so slack,
Has glorious spangles, and its stars
Are like a conqueror's fresh from wars.
Who wove it in Time's awful loom,
With woof of glory, warp of gloom?
Jove's planet glitters on thy breast,
The morning star adorns thy crest,
The waxing or the waning moon
Clings to thy turban, late or soon:
Orion's belt is thine, thy thigh
His jewelled sword hangs brightly by:
The Pleiades seven, the gipsy's star,
Shine as thy shoulder-knots afar;
And the great Dog-star, bright, unknown,
Blazes beside thee like a throne.
Take heart! thy coat so long and black,
Sore-worn, and fitting round thee slack,
Is brodered by the Northern Lights,
Those silver arrows shot by sprites—
Is powdered by the Milky Way,
With awful pearls unknown to day,
Which well make up for all the hues
Proud Summer, bridegroom-like, may use.

Proud Summer with his roses' sheen,
And dress of scarlet, blue, and green,
Floods us with such a sea of light,
We miss the faint far isles of night,
And thoughtless dance, while he with lute
Beguiles us, or assists to fruit;
But, like a shade from spirit-land
Dim Winter beckons with his hand—
He beckons; all things darker grow,
Save white-churned waves and wreathing snow:
We pause; a chill creeps through our veins;
We dare not thank him for his pains;
We fear to follow, and we creep
To candle-light, to cards, to sleep.

Yet, when we follow him, how deep
The secret he has got to keep!
How wonderful! how passing grand!
For peering through his storms there stand
The eternal cities of the sky,
With stars like street-lamps hung on high—
No angel yet can sum their worth,
Though angels sang when they had birth.

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